

The Theaters

This, That and the Other About Mr. Woods, "The Demi-Virgin" and Kindred Topics

By Percy Hammond

MR. A. H. WOODS'S impish conduct as a producer is again causing uneasiness among those who wish the drama to be well behaved. What are we to do, they say, with this rich and able fellow who employs his vigor, industry, wealth and talents in mischievous enterprises like "Getting Gertie's Garter" and "The Demi-Virgin," which teach us nothing, save impropriety? How shall Mr. Woods's soul be saved and his better self developed for the common weal? Here he is the chief baron of the Messrs. Shubert, owning many theaters, actors and plays, full of life, vigor and eagerness, and in a position to do the needy drama good. Yet he is deaf to the wail of suffering Theatrics, and proceeds thoughtlessly and easily along the poison ivy path of devilry.

Prayer or psycho-analysis? Are there sanatoria for ailing entrepreneurs, or commodious reform schools whither the theater's bad boys may be sent for redemption? Shall we have Mr. Woods examined? How can we repair him—by supplication, punishment or by aspersing his pranks in our newspaper columns as the godly Zozimus inveighed against Thais in the baths and gymnasia of ancient Antioch. A committee might be appointed to adopt a memorial petitioning Mr. Woods to abandon the haymows, the underclothing, the stripped cupids, the garters and other unseemly things of life for something better by Mr. Tarkington or Eugene O'Neill. All he requires is a suggestion.

Mr. Woods's viewpoint deserves some consideration. He has examined the human race from his Broadway tower, and his diagnosis is pessimistic, though jocular. "If Shakespeare," he remarks, "were producing 'Macbeth' to-day, he would say, being a business man, 'Move that castle into the bedroom, and put the witches into silk pajamas—they're wearing 'em pink in Scotland this year.' He threw as wise a quill as Avery Hopwood does, and he had few failures. The present public cries for 'Getting Gertie's Garter' and 'The Demi-Virgin' as babies cry for Castoria."

"What I do is this," continues Mr. Woods. "I lose a lot of money preparing noble things for the theater. Then I put on 'The Demi-Virgin' and get it back with a surplus to do other noble things to keep the critics and the Drama League quiet. If I didn't, I'd be running a harness store in Perth Amboy, next door to the Shuberts' hay and feed emporium. As Cleopatra says, 'Give 'em what they want, now and then,' and 'The Demi-Virgin' is what they want."

R. E. L. writes to say that he feels that New York City is wronged by the caricatures who compose the plays about New York. He says that William McQuinn, Channing Pollock, Vachel Smith, Roi Cooper Megrue, Willard Mack and even those eager hangers-on, Frederick and Mrs. Fannie, are ill equipped by birth and the manner of their lives to penetrate the soul of New York. Hence the city is misrepresented to itself and the nation by false and uncanonical fabrications, written by inept amateurs in the art of misanthropy in the metropolis.

The correspondent surmises that somewhere in New York City remote from the transient belt there are numerous real New Yorkers, who, from years of contact with the evil influences of themselves and their super-urban environment, could breed edifying New York drama. These characters, he thinks, should be isolated in a play by one who has met them, and who, via the theater, can make public their unknown habits of joy and sorrow. There is earnestness over the apprentice New Yorker writing of his fellow novices, and there is yearning for the real thing. Boy! Page a native of the capital who can write a play about the capital.

The experts say that such entertainments as "The Demi-Virgin" and "The Greenwich Village Follies" are more popular with people who are otherwise trim, than they are with the otherwise hardened. Frowned upon by those of liberal attitude toward misdemeanor in general, they are regarded by the devious as merely venturesome. The sophisticated man-about-town is grieved by their boldness; the prudent matron, with daughters, finds amusement in their risqué escapades. A theater psychologist explains the phenomenon. "Transgression, like love," he says, "will find a way, and the chaste persons who enjoy 'The Demi-Virgin' are having a vicarious fling at the world, the flesh and the devil. The drama's dissipations are, for a time, and they leave the theater, after a brief period of cutting, unharmed by actual experience."

At the Columbia

"Keep Smiling" is the title of the new two-act burlesque which will be presented at the Columbia Theater this week. James E. Cooper, who is responsible for many of the most meritorious productions in this branch of the amusement field, is the producer of the show. William K. Wells wrote the book. Bert Lahr, an eccentric comedian of established popularity, heads the presenting company, and is supported by Harry Kay, Bud Phalan, Charles Wesson, Ade Fergusson, Harry Melton, Mercedes La Fay, George Francis, Emily Dyer and Harry Bolton. The vaudeville bill is headed by the Six Foot Three, announced as "Eighteen feet of harmony."

New Hugo Ballin Picture

"Jane Eyre" will be released by Blockson next week. The screen version of Charlotte Brontë's novel was made by Hugo Ballin, and Mabel Ballin is seen in the title role. Norman Kravitz will play Fairfax Rochester, her lover. In the supporting cast are Crawford Kent, J. Webb Dillon, June Anna Terry and others.

New Plays

By Beauvais Fox

THE FIVE offerings that dropped out of the theaters last night will not diminish the playgoer's list. Six new attractions supply the loss and give one for lagunaple.

There are three flocks of unusual worth among the little flock that is shepherded in. They are "The Grand Duke," the Belasco production at the Lyceum; "Anna Christie," the new O'Neill play at the Vanderbilt; and the Shakespeare repertory of Sothorn and Marlowe at the Century.

The departures are "The Easiest Way," "The Last Waltz," "The Love Letter," "The Wren" and "The Fan." Of the fluctuating fortunes along Broadway the most interesting is that of "The Bill of Divorcement," the English play at the Cohan Theater. Opening to indifferent business, this piece was scheduled to retire on November 7, giving way to "The Perfect Fool." But steady improvement in its reception in the last two weeks has forced it well toward the top of the list in demand. Next week it will go into the Times Square Theater, succeeding "The Demi-Virgin," which, in turn, displaces the retiring "Back Pay" at the Eltinge.

E. H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe will begin their brief season of Shakespearean plays to-morrow evening at the Century Theater with "Twelfth Night," which will be their bill for the entire first week. "Hamlet" will be given the second week, "The Taming of the Shrew" the third, and "The Merchant of Venice," the new offering of their repertoire, for the fourth and last week of the engagement. The stage decorations are in the same style

as those used by these stars on their last tour, two years ago. Notice is given to all playgoers that the performances will begin promptly at 8 o'clock at night and 2 o'clock at the Saturday matinee, which is the only one of the week.

Anna Pavlova, in her seventh annual American tour, which begins at the Manhattan Opera House to-morrow night, has with her a supporting cast which includes many of the foremost classical dancers of the time. Mme. Pavlova brings to us four new ballets, "Polish Dances," "Dionysus," "The Norse Idyll" and "Fairy Tales," but will be seen also in many of the old favorites, such as "Coppelia," "Chopiniana," "Amarilla," "The Fauns," "The Magic Flute" and "Giselle."

"Golden Days," a comedy of youth, by Sidney Toler and Marion Short, with Helen Hayes in the leading role, will be presented at the Gaiety Theater on Tuesday evening. The characters in this Cinderella-like story are all, except for four adults, extremely youthful, and are portrayed by a cast of youngsters who tip the scales at not more than twenty years apiece. The scenes are laid in a small Connecticut village, during the stress of 1917-1918. Mr. Toler has staged the play for George C. Tyler and A. L. Erlanger, the producers.

On Tuesday evening David Belasco will present Lionel Atwill in "The Grand Duke," a Parisian comedy by Sacha Guitry, at the Lyceum Theater. In this play the versatile Guitry, whose "Deburau" lives freshly in the memory, has shown a phase of life that excites

The Evolution of a Star

Otis Skinner

Otis Skinner, one of the foremost actors on the American stage, now appearing in "Blood and Sand" at the Empire Theater, was born at Cambridge, Mass., on June 28, 1858, while his father, a clergyman, was stationed there. His parents removed to Hartford, Conn., while he was still a child, and he grew up there. He began his professional career as a reader and made his debut as an actor as Jim, an old negro, in "Woodleigh," at the Philadelphia Museum in 1877.

During his first year he had an unusually vigorous experience as a stock actor, and when the season ended he had appeared in more than 120 parts. The next season he was in the stock company of the Walnut Street Theater, Philadelphia, supporting such stars as Januscheck, Lotta, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, John T. Raymond, Fanny Davenport and Ada Cavendish, and gaining vast experience and proficiency.

He then went to New York, making his metropolitan appearance in a spectacular fairy piece called "Enchantment," produced by the Brothers Kiralfy at Niblo's Garden Theater. During the season he first played with Edwin Booth at Booth's Theater, New York, and elsewhere.

The season of 1880-81 found him a member of the Boston Theater Company. The following three seasons he supported Lawrence Barrett, under whose direction he first rose to the position of leading man.

Augustin Daly then made a contract for his services at Daly's Theater, New York, and from 1884 to 1889 he appeared as a leading member of the famous Daly Company in the United States and Canada, and for three seasons in the capitals of Europe.

He then appeared as the leading support of Edwin Booth and Helen Modjeska in their joint tour, playing such parts as Laertes, Macduff, Bassanio and De Mauprat.

During the season of 1890-91 and '92 he was leading man for Margaret Mather, and during the second season Mr. Skinner was manager and co-star.

For the next two years he was associated with Mme. Modjeska in a repertory of Shakespearean and classic plays and made his first appearance as Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice."

In 1894 he began his career as a star, appearing first in "His Grace de Grammont." In 1903 he made a joint starring tour with Miss Ada Rehan, playing "The Merchant of Venice," "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The School for Scandal." Since then he has starred in many roles, among the more recent and best remembered being Hajj in "Kismet," Tony in "Mister Antonio" and Colonel Philippe Braid in "The Honor of the Family" and Pietro in the play of that title. Last season he toured last winter as Hanaud in "At the Villa Rose."

although the leading character of that play appears also in "Anna Christie." The play has been directed by Arthur Hopkins.

Charles Dillingham announces Tuesday night as the opening date for his new musical comedy, "Good Morning, Dearie," by Anne Caldwell and Jerome Kern, joint authors of "The Night Bont." Louise Groody will have the chief rôle in this new production also, with a large and imposing cast of "featured" players in her support.

The Stage and Its People



Norwich Players

Elizabethan Drama Approximated in Original Settings; Animadversions on "Picture-Frame" Stage

From The Tribune's European Bureau

NORWICH, England, October 10.

PICKING his way through the labyrinth of narrow and ancient streets in this small English town any evening this week, one might turn into the Maddermarket Theater and find himself at once transported into the sixteenth century. Here in this little theater with the Old World name, which seats about three hundred persons, you may see "As You Like It" rendered just as—or very nearly as—it probably was rendered in Shakespeare's time. Except that the Maddermarket Theater has a roof and is fitted with electric light and lines—and this latter modern improvement is not obtrusive—Shakespeare himself might very well stroll in here and find nothing else amiss beyond the fact that the women's parts are played by women instead of boys.

The history of the Norwich Players, which has culminated in this opening of the first Elizabethan theater to be constructed in this country since Cromwell ordered the closing of the playhouses, is one of the brightest spots in the unexciting story of English drama to-day.

The Players are a company of amateurs performing for pleasure and not for profit, but under the direction of Nugent Monck they have shown that their local talent can provide dramatic fare which scarcely any London theater can rival. Hitherto they have

played in the Old Musick House, which enjoyed the distinction of being older, lower-rented and smaller-staged than any other licensed place of entertainment in the country. The Old Musick House, "anciently the great messuage of Moses the Jew, a man of great wealth and ability in the time of William Rufus," held only a hundred people, and the Norwich Players searched for a new home.

Reconstructing an Elizabethan Playhouse

In their search they stumbled upon an eighteenth century building, with galleries, which had formerly been a church and presented possibilities of being turned into a sixteenth century theater. Under Nugent Monck's direction, Captain Paul Noel reconstructed an Elizabethan playhouse, following as closely as the building would allow the specification found in the Henslowe papers for the rebuilding of the Fortune Theater. Strictly speaking, the Fortune, opened in 1601, only two years before the Queen's death, was not Elizabethan. The typical theaters of Shakespeare's working years as actor and playwright—the Curtain, Newington Butts, Rose, Blackfriars, Swan and Globe—were circular inside and polygonal outside. The Fortune, the model of which the Norwich Maddermarket follows, was the first theater to be constructed with a square auditorium.

Aside from this structural detail, however, the reconstruction justifies the Maddermarket management's claim that the place has been built "so that Shakespeare can be given on the stage for which he wrote." There is a gallery running over the stage in the most approved Elizabethan style. There are no footlights; the lighting is projected from a limelight chamber in the pit and from a batten in the "flies." There is no scenery except a tapestry tableau curtain of the Forest of Arden. If you are a "groundling" you are almost touching the players on the "apron" stage. Two feet away from your rush-bottomed chair the prompter, in the dress of the period, leans over where the footlights ought to be.

Yeats Would Change Form of Modern Stage

The "apron" stage, the characteristic feature of the Elizabethan playhouse, projects forward from the middle stage into the pit. There are in addition a rear stage and an upper stage or gallery. The curtain can be lowered in front of the main stage, but behind the apron, so that the action is continuous; there is no waiting for changes of scenery.

During an interval on the first night W. B. Yeats, the Irish poet, seized the occasion for a vigorous attack on the modern form of the stage. He linked up the Maddermarket Theater enterprise with a European attempt to bring back again the Elizabethan stage art. Yeats declared that our present picture-frame stage is all wrong for the presentation of romantic plays and "the real literature of the theater." For the proper presentation of any but "the realistic plays of the modern kind," he said, "we ought to bring back the apron theater of Shakespeare's days. The audience, he contended, ought to be around the players on three sides, so that they could hear clearly what is said and catch the shades of the players' voices. 'The apron ought to extend as far out as that,' he exclaimed, 'so that the middle of the floor on which the groundlings were sitting.'

New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Century Theater E. H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe will begin their season of Shakespeare with "Twelfth Night." The supporting cast includes Frederick Lewis, Rowland Buckstone, Sydney Mather, Albert Howson, Frank Peters, Francis Bicknell, Vernon Kelso, V. L. Granville, Alma Kruger, Lenore Chippendale, Frank Howson, James Hagen, Harold Webster, Jerome Colomare, Carolyn Forriady, Lillian Gray, Elaine Sims, Dina Schleicher, Helen Besly, Eleanor Wells and John Abrams.

At the Manhattan Opera House Anna Pavlova begins her season of ballet.

At the Globe Theater Charles Dillingham will offer "Good Morning, Dearie," a musical comedy by Jerome Kern and Anne Caldwell. The cast: Louise Groody, Oscar Shaw, Harland Dixon, Ada Lewis, William Kent, Maurice and Hughes, John Price Jones, Marie Callahan, John Scannell, Pauline Hall, Peggy Kurton and the Sixteen Sunshine Girls, a John Tiller group from the Follies Bergere.

TUESDAY—At the Lyceum Theater David Belasco will present Lionel Atwill in "The Grand Duke," a comedy by Sacha Guitry. The supporting cast: Lina Abarbanell, Vivian Tobin, John L. Shine, Morgan Farley and others.

At the Gaiety Theater George C. Tyler and A. L. Erlanger will present Helen Hayes in "Golden Days," a comedy of youth by Sidney Toler and Marion Short. The cast: Donald Gallagher, Selena Royle, Ruth Harding, S. Eden Thompson, Robert Fiske, Jessa May, Russell Medcraft, Alexander Clark Jr., Justin Lee, Miss Henderson, Marion Buckler, Weiman Parsons, Anna Wallace, Arthur Christian, Joe Wallace, Mina Gale Haynes, Blanche Chapman, Florence Earle and Camille Pastorfield.

WEDNESDAY—At the Vanderbilt Theater Arthur Hopkins offers "Anna Christie," a new play by Eugene O'Neill. The cast: Pauline Lord, George Marion, Frank Shannon and others.

Stage Gossip

ARTHUR HOPKINS is to be the

arbiter of the next important event in our theater. John Barrymore being due home from England to-morrow, the matter of the star's new play is to be decided by Mr. Hopkins at an early date. Touching the various vehicular reports the producer keeps his counsel. One rumor is that Barrymore is to be starred in a new play based on the life of a prominent American literary figure. Another hint in circulation casts him in Edmond Rostand's posthumous play, "The Last Night of Don Juan," the production of which at the Comédie Française was halted by the war. The most interesting story going the rounds is that late in the season Mr. Hopkins will present the three Barrymores in "Othello"—Lionel as the Moor, John as Iago and Ethel as Desdemona.

Margaret Wycherly will head the special cast of "The Verge," by Susan Glaspell, which the Provincetown Players will present for the opening bill at their playhouse in Macdougal Street, on November 14. Several seasons ago when Miss Glaspell's "Bentrice" was produced by the Provincetown Players, Miss Wycherly told the author of her curiosity in regard to the unwritten part of the unknown protagonist, who, though dead, gave her name to the play and overtook every line. "Some day write a play in which a woman as dominant plays her visible part and let me see it." On the completion of "The Verge" Miss Glaspell sent her the manuscript as "a play in which a woman speaks," and the result is that Miss Wycherly will head this

group of players during the run of "The Verge."

Margaret Anglin has been made an honorary member of the English Club of the University of California and has accepted the post of illustrious adviser to the organization, which was offered her in recognition of the many contributions she has made to the English Club records and to dramatic

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